BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 26th February, 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor A Bullen (Chair)
Councillors B Ayres, T Barclay, A Beales, S Bearshaw, J Bhondi, P Bland, R Blunt, A Bubb, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, R Colwell, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, P Devulapalli, A Dickinson, S Everett, J Fry, D Heneghan, P Hodson, H Humphrey, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, A Lawrence, S Lintern, B Long, J Lowe, A Moore, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, J Osborne, T Parish, S Ring, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, S Sandell, D Sayers, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey and A Ware

C:97 **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Father Adrian Ling.

C:98 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anota, Bone, Jamieson, Ratcliffe, Tyler and de Winton.

C:99 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

C:100 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

C:101 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

C:102 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUDGET**

There were no Public Questions relating to the Budget.

C:103 **THE BUDGET, FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION**

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Councillor Morley proposed the Budget, Financial Strategy and Council Tax Resolution and spoke in support, detailing the impact of the government settlements, efficiency targets, funding allocations and contribution to reserves. Councillor Morley outlined the budget's composition and outlined a new community project fund which had been introduced allowing Councillors to apply for one off projects.

Councillor Beales seconded the Budget, Financial Strategy and Council Tax Resolution and reserved his right to speak.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Leaders of each Opposition Group were invited to speak on the Budget.

Councillor Blunt stated that he was pleased to see a balanced budget and was pleased in the way that Members had been involved early on in the process with a plethora of briefings and updates and thanked officers for engaging Members. However, he was concerned that, since the Budget had been subject to scrutiny, new information had been received and the budget had been amended and Members had not had the chance to scrutinise the new figures in detail.

Councillor Heneghan thanked officers and indicated that she would be supporting the budget as it was a requirement to have a balanced budget, however she had issues with the process carried out. She referred to the Labour Government funding reforms and the work of the previous Government. She commented that the revised settlement from Government was about fairness.

Councillor Heneghan commented that the budget could be more ambitious and money diverted to where it was needed to help residents. Councillor Heneghan informed Council that the Labour Group had submitted amendments to the budget, however these had been rejected by the Administration and were based on the provisional budget, not the amended version that Councillors were now being asked to agree.

Councillor Heneghan referred to the additional funding which was available through the revised Government settlement and was pleased to see the addition of the Community Project Scheme which would be available to Members, and stated that the Labour Group had proposals which they would put forward.

Going forward, Councillor Heneghan requested that budget papers be made easier to understand and important figures highlighted rather than buried in the body of the report.

Councillor Heneghan also requested that the Council revisit the Council Procedure Rules relating to the submission of budget amendments as she felt the rules were currently restrictive.

Councillor Kirk commented that the lack of Scrutiny on the budget was worrying but he was happy with what was being presented. He stated that Reform UK would like to see more support available for businesses and to support tourism and to consider assistance to individual wards.

Councillor Kemp stated that it was a credit to officers that a balanced budget had been produced. She referred to the Council Tax increase being at the maximum level during a cost of living crisis and that the Fair Funding Review did not consider rural areas. Councillor Kemp was concerned that Local Government Reorganisation would also come at a significant cost to the organisation. Councillor Kemp welcomed the introduction of the Community Projects Fund, to sit alongside the Councillors Community Grants Scheme.

Councillor Kemp also raised concerns regarding the Council Procedure Rules relating to budget amendments and the ability to scrutinise the revised figures.

The Mayor then opened up the debate to Members.

Councillor Long thanked officers for their work on this. He stated that Government figures had materially changed since the budget had been subject to scrutiny and the Council Procedure Rules did not allow for amendments to be submitted late on in the process. He stated he was not unhappy with the budget, but was not happy with the procedure. He commented that he could request that Standing Orders be suspended so that amendments could be submitted.

Councillor Long referred to the Community Project Fund and that he would use this money differently by not increasing fees and charges, council tax and car parking charges. He felt that the increase in car parking charges would impact town centres.

Councillor Long stated that he could not support the budget as he did not have the ability to submit amendments.

Councillor Dark thanked the officers and Portfolio Holders and commented that production of the budget was a lengthy process. He was disappointed that there was not the opportunity to scrutinise the revised budget following the Government Settlement and that the Government should have engaged and confirmed figures earlier on in the process.

Councillor Dark requested that going forward a cross-party Group be formed to discuss the use of the additional Government Settlement monies received.

Councillor Osborne thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder and appreciated that the Government Settlement had not been confirmed until late on in the process and was too late for amendments to be put forward. Councillor Osborne was pleased to see the introduction of the Community Projects Fund and looked forward to seeing the benefits it would bring. Councillor Osborne agreed that a cross-party group to monitor the Medium Term Financial Strategy would be beneficial to ensure transparency.

Councillor Osborne referred to the procedure for submitting amendments and reminded Council that they had agreed to introduce this and acknowledged the reasons why this had been introduced, however he agreed that the process required a review.

Councillor Joyce commented that the Council was not compliant by not accepting amendments and made comments relating to the legality and processes involved in the budget setting.

The Monitoring Officer provided a point of clarification relating to the legality of the budget and reminded Members that the Monitoring Officer only had authority to make administrative changes to the Constitution. She explained that the administration had submitted this budget to Full Council and Cabinet had considered the budget using the information available to them at the time. She informed Members that the budget presented today was legal and could be decided upon.

Councillor de Whalley acknowledged the huge amount of work involved in producing the budget during challenging circumstances and reminded Councillors that fees and charges needed to cover costs and reserves were vital.

Councillor Ring reminded Council that they had considered and agreed to the Council Procedure Rules and the process for submitting amendments to the budget. He commented that the budget being presented was not an amended version from that submitted to Cabinet, there was just more money available following the confirmation of the Government Settlement. Councillor Ring commented that the budget was sensible and prudent which took the Council through the last couple of years of existence. He referred to the Community Projects Fund and that this would be available to all Councillors.

Councillor Everett referred to the statutory duty to present a balanced budget and raised concern relating to the process for amendments and the changes that had come forward so late.

Councillor Devulapalli thanked all those involved in producing the budget papers and was concerned with the lack of response from Central Government.

Councillor Beales addressed Council and referred them to the briefing sessions which had been available to all Councillors, and the papers that had been circulated. He welcomed the Community Project Fund and stated that Terms of Reference and criteria for this would be produced. Councillor Beales thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder for their work.

Councillor Beales welcomed cross-party input on monitoring the Medium Term Financial Strategy and stated he was happy if a review of the Council Procedure Rules took place via the Constitution Informal Working Group.

Councillor Beales urged Councillors to support the budget as presented.

In summing up, Councillor Morley referred to the good relationship the Council had with the MP's, the grants that the Council gave to good causes and the Community Projects Fund. Councillor Morley asked Members to approve the budget.

In accordance with Statutory Instrument 2014 No. 165, Local Government, England, The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, any decision taken on the Council's Budget or Council Tax setting must be taken with a recorded vote.

The recommendations included within the Agenda were put to a recorded vote, the result of which is set out below.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
	Ayres	
Barclay		
Beales		
Bearshaw		
Bhondi		
Bland		
Blunt		
Bubb		
Bullen		
Coates		
Collingham		
Collop		
Colwell		
Crofts		
		Dark
Devulapalli		
Dickinson		
		Everett
		Fry
Heneghan		
		Hodson
Humphrey		
Jones		
	Joyce	
		Kemp
		Kirk
Kunes		

Lawrence		
Lintern		
	Long	
Lowe		
		Moore
Moriarty		
Morley		
		Nash
Osborne		
Parish		
		Pidcock
Ring		
Rose		
Rust		
Ryves		
Sandell		
Sayers		
Spikings		
Squire		
Storey		
Ware		
De Whalley		
37	3	9

RESOLVED: Council approved the recommendations as set out below:

1) Approve the Policy on Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balance and the maximum balances set for the reserves as detailed in Appendix 8 of "The Financial Strategy 2025/2030" as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to approve the contract for the appointment of a strategic partner to implement Local Government Reorganisation.

3) Approve the revision to the Budget for 2025/2026 (as set out in Appendix 1 of this report).

4) Approve the Fees and Charges for 2026/2027 as detailed in Appendix 4a of "The Financial Strategy 2025/2030" and approves the amended Fees and Charges Policy in Appendix 4b, as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

5) Approve the Pay Policy as detailed in Appendix 5 of "The Financial Strategy 2025/2030" as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

6) Approve a minimum requirement of the General Fund balance for 2026/2027 of £1,382,750.

7) Approve the budget of £28,845,006 for 2026/2027 and note the projections for 2027/2028, 2028/2029 and 2029/2030 (as set out in Appendix 1 of this report).

8) Pursuant to Section 25 of the Local Government Act, Council is asked to have due regard to this statement at Section 9 of this report when considering and approving the budget and the level of council tax for 2026/2027.

9) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 contain rules for the calculation of the Council Tax Base, which is an amount required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to be used in the calculation of the tax by the Council as the billing authority, and Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner as major precepting authorities, and in the calculation of the precept payable by the Council to the County Council and Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Under Officer Delegated Decision the Council Tax Base was calculated as follows for the year 2026/2027:

Number of dwellings in each Council Tax band; taking into account the discounts, exemptions, premiums, rate of collection and Council Tax Support.

(a) 57,305 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year.

The tax base for each Parish

(b) the amounts listed in Appendix 3 Parish Taxbases & Precepts, (Column headed - Taxbase) being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as the amount of its Council Taxbase for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

10) Approve that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2026/2027 in accordance with Sections 31A to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by S74 of the Localism Act 2011):

Total expenditure

(a) £116,592,221 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

Total income

(b) £102,726,822 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

The difference between expenditure and income

(c) £13,865,399 being the amount by which the aggregate at 10(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 10(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its total budget for the year. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

Average Council Tax for Band D property (Borough and Parish)

(d) £241.96 being the amount at 10(c) above divided by the amount at 10(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

The total of Parish Precepts and Special Expenses

(e) £4,843,313 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

The Borough Council's Council Tax for a Band D property (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses)

(f)(1) £157.44 being the amount at 10(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 10(e) above by the amount at 9(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

The Borough Council's Council Tax for each valuation band

(f)(2)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H

£ 104.96	£ 122.45	£ 139.95	£ 157.44	£ 192.43	£ 227.41	£ 262.40	£ 314.88

The Borough, Special Expenses and Parish Councils' Council Tax for a Band D property in each Parish

(g) the amounts listed in Col (4), Appendix 4 Special Expenses and Appendix 3 Parish Precepts, when added to the amount at 10 (f)(1) above being the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned divided in each case by the taxbases in Appendix 3 calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, gives the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwelling in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

The Borough and Parish Councils' Council Tax for each tax band in each Parish

(h) the amounts listed in Cols (1) to (8), Appendix 4 Special Expenses and Appendix 5 Parish Precepts, together with the amounts shown above in 10(f)(2) as valuation bands A to H - being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 10(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

11) Note that for the year 2026/2027 Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	**Norfolk County Council**	**Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner**	**Charge in Relation to Band D**
A	£1,228.92	£229.86	6/9ths
B	£1,433.74	£268.17	7/9ths
C	£1,638.56	£306.48	8/9ths
D	£1,843.38	£344.79	9/9ths

E	£2,253.02	£421.41	11/9ths
F	£2,662.66	£498.03	13/9ths
G	£3,072.30	£574.65	15/9ths
H	£3,686.76	£689.58	18/9ths

The total Council Tax for each band in each parish (Appendix 6)

12) Approve that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 10h and 11 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets these as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2026/2027 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.

13) Approve that the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Assistant Director Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), Revenues and Benefits Manager, Revenues Manager, Assistant Revenues Manager, Revenues Team Leaders, Committal Manager, Committal Officer, Non-Domestic Rates Officer, Generic Revenues and Benefits Officers, Revenues Officers and Revenues Assistants be authorised to demand and recover, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council Tax set by this resolution, the Non Domestic Rates payable by Ratepayers and the annual Business Improvement District Levy, and be authorised to appear on behalf of the Council in Magistrates' Courts in respect of recovery proceedings.

14) Approve that the Officers be authorised to give notice of the setting of the Council Tax in accordance with Section 96 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

C:104 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET ON 3 FEBRUARY 2026 ON BUDGET ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

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Councillor Morley, seconded by Councillor Beales proposed the following Cabinet recommendations be taken en bloc and this was agreed:

CAB121: Capital Programme and Resources
CAB122: Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/2027
CAB123: Capital Strategy 2026/2027

Councillor Morley presented the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme and Treasury Management Policies highlighting the statutory requirements, project tiers, funding sources and debt management. He explained that the Capital Strategy was a high-level document which linked the corporate strategy, capital expenditure and treasury management. Councillor Morley provided detail of the long-term loan arrangements and work ongoing to manage these arrangements.

Councillor Beales, in seconding the recommendations, reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Long spoke in support of the reports as presented, noting that these had not changed since they had been subject to scrutiny.

Councillor Blunt commented that he would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Heneghan commented that she would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Joyce commented that money had been found to support the Capital Programme during these difficult times and made reference to losses that the Council was facing in housing delivery.

Councillor Beales called for a point of order on the comment made by Councillor Joyce in that it was not accurate.

Councillor Dark echoed the comments made by Councillor Long and indicated he would be supporting the recommendations as they had been subjected to scrutiny.

Councillor Dark called for a point of order in that points of order should only be used in relation to clarification on the Constitution.

Councillor Moriarty called a point of order in that speeches should be relevant to the current item being considered.

Councillor Kemp indicated her support for the recommendations, however raised concern that the Ferry was not included.

Councillor Beales referred to Council Procedure rule 15.1 in that a point of personal explanation could be used to remedy misunderstandings and felt his interjection was reasonable.

Councillor Beales commented that in relation to the Capital Programme and Major Housing Scheme it was important that facts were accurate. He acknowledged that there was a projected loss on Florence Fields.

Councillor Morley, in summing up referred to the non-financial benefits of the Major Housing Schemes, including social value and other benefits to residents.

RESOLVED: The budget related recommendations from Cabinet held on 3 February 2026 were agreed by Full Council as set out below:

CAB121: Capital Programme and Resources

1) Cabinet recommends to Council the amendments to capital schemes and resources for the 2025-2030 capital programme as detailed in the report. 2
2) Cabinet recommends to Council that new capital bids as set out in appendix 3 and the exempt report, are approved to be included in the capital programme 2025-2030 as detailed.

CAB122: Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/2027.

Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council approve:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/2027, including treasury indicators for 2025-2030.
- The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2026/2027
- The Investment Strategy 2026/2027

CAB123: Capital Strategy 2026/2027

1) that Cabinet approved the Capital Strategy 2026/2027 as attached to this report for onward approval by Full Council.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm